

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A font sharing system in which data can be communicated between a client computer and a server, wherein said client computer includes means for
- 5 transmitting character specifying data, which specifies a character, and font specifying data, which specifies a font of the character, to said server; and said server includes:
- first character image data storage means storing
- 10 character image data expressing a character as an image; receiving means for receiving the character specifying data and the font specifying data transmitted from said client computer;
- retrieval means for retrieving, from said first
- 15 character image data storage means, character image data expressing a character, which has been specified by the character specifying data received by said receiving means, as an image in such a manner that the specified character will have a font specified by the font
- 20 specifying data received by said receiving means; character image data generating means for generating the character image data in response to a situation where the character image data cannot be found in said first character image data storage means by
- 25 retrieval performed by said retrieval means; and character image data transmitting means for transmitting, to said client computer, character image data generated by said character image data generating

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determination means for determining whether  
character image data expressing a character as an image

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25        display control means for controlling a display  
device so as to display, on a display screen, the  
representative character represented by the font preview  
data in response to a determination by said font preview

data storage determination means that the font preview data has been stored; and

means for transmitting to the server a request to transmit the font preview data in response to a  
5 determination by said font preview data storage determination means that the font preview data has not been stored; and

said server further includes font preview data transmitting means for transmitting the font preview  
10 data to said client computer in response to the font preview data transmission request transmitted from said client computer.

6. The system according to claim 1, wherein said transmitting means of said client computer transmits, to  
15 the server, character string specifying data for specifying a combination of a plurality of characters constructing a character string, and font specifying data for specifying fonts of the characters constructing the character string;

20 said receiving means of said server receives the character string data and the font specifying data transmitted from said transmitting means; and

said retrieval means of said server retrieves, from said first character image data storage means, character  
25 image data expressing characters as images, wherein each of these characters, which construct the character string specified by the character string data, has a font that has been specified by the font specifying

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data.

7. The system according to claim 1, wherein said client computer further includes style data transmitting means for transmitting, to the server, character style  
5 designating data for designating style of a character specified by the character specifying data; and

said server includes:

designated character-style retrieval means for retrieving, from said first character image data storage  
10 means, designated-style character image data expressing, as an image, a character of a style designated by the character style designating data transmitted from said style data transmitting means;

designated-style character image data generating  
15 means for generating the designated-style character image data in response to a situation where the designated-style character image data is not found by said designated character-style retrieval means; and

designated-style character image data transmitting  
20 means for transmitting, to said client computer, the designated-style character image data generated by said designated-style character image data generating means or the designated-style character image data found by said designated character-style retrieval means.

8. The system according to claim 7, wherein said server  
25 further includes style information transmitting means for transmitting, to said client computer, style information for generating the designated-style

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character image data; and

said client computer further includes means for generating the designated-style character image data based upon the style information and the character image data transmitted from said style information transmitting means.

9. The system according to claim 1, wherein said client computer further includes character image data storage means for storing the character image data transmitted from said character image data transmitting means.

10. The system according to claim 1, wherein said server includes:

a printing device; and

means for generating new character image data, from the character image data that has been designated by said character image data generating means, so as to obtain a character image having a resolution suited to the resolution of said printing device.

11. A client computer capable of communicating data with a server, comprising:

means for transmitting character specifying data, which specifies a character, and font specifying data, which specifies a font of the character, to said server; and

receiving means for receiving character image data expressing a character, which has been transmitted from said server and specified by the character specifying data, as an image in such a manner that the specified

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can be communicated between a client computer and a server, comprising the steps of:

transmitting character specifying data, which  
specifies a character, and font specifying data, which  
5 specifies a font of the character, from the client  
computer to the server;

receiving the character specifying data and the  
font specifying data at the server;

retrieving, at the server, character image data  
10 expressing a character, which has been specified by the  
received character specifying data, as an image in such  
a manner that the specified character will have a font  
specified by the received font specifying data;

transmitting the character image data that has been  
15 found from the server to the client computer;

in response to a situation where the character image data is not found, generating the character image data; and

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        transmitting the generated character image data
20  from the server to the client computer.

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14. The method according to claim 13, further comprising the steps of:

transmitting, from the client computer to the server, size designating data representing the size of a character specified by said character specifying data; and

retrieving, at the server, character image data  
expressing a character, which has been specified by the

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character specifying data and has a size that has been designated by the size designating data, as an image in such a manner that the specified character will have a font specified by the font specifying data.

5 15. The method according to claim 14, wherein said client computer displays, on a display screen, a frame having the size of a character represented on the basis of the size designating data.

10 16. The method according to claim 13, further comprising a step of transmitting, from the client computer to the server, character string specifying data for specifying a combination of a plurality of characters constructing a character string, and font specifying data for specifying fonts of the characters  
15 constructing the character string;

receiving, at the server, the character string data and the font specifying data transmitted from the client computer; and

20 retrieving, at the server, character image data expressing characters as images, wherein each of these characters, which construct the character string specified by the character string data, has a font that has been specified by the font specifying data.

25 17. A method of controlling the operation of a client computer capable of communicating data with a server, comprising the steps of:

transmitting character specifying data, which specifies a character, and font specifying data, which

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specifies a font of the character, to the server; and  
receiving character image data expressing a  
character, which has been transmitted from the server  
and specified by the character specifying data, as an  
5 image in such a manner that the specified character will  
have a font specified by the font specifying data.

18. A method of controlling the operation of a server  
capable of communicating data with a client computer,  
comprising the steps of:

10 receiving character specifying data, which  
specifies a character, and font specifying data, which  
specifies a font of the character, transmitted from the  
client computer;

retrieving character image data expressing a  
15 character, which has been specified by the received  
character specifying data, as an image in such a manner  
that the specified character will have a font specified  
by the font specifying data;

generating the character image data in response to  
20 a situation where the character image data cannot be  
found; and

transmitting, to the client computer, character  
image data that has been generated or character image  
data that has been found.

25 19. A recording medium storing a program for  
controlling a client computer capable of communicating  
data with a server, said program:

causing the server to transmit character specifying

data, which specifies a character, and font specifying data, which specifies a font of the character, to the server; and

controlling the client computer so as to receive  
5 character image data expressing a character, which has been transmitted from the server and specified by the character specifying data, as an image in such a manner that the specified character will have a font specified by the font specifying data.

10 20. A server-readable recording medium storing a program for controlling a server capable of communicating data with a client computer, said program:

causing the server to receive character specifying data, which specifies a character, and font specifying  
15 data, which specifies a font of the character, transmitted from the client computer;

causing the server to retrieve character image data expressing a character, which has been specified by the received character specifying data, as an image in such  
20 a manner that the specified character will have a font specified by the font specifying data;

causing the server to generate the character image data in response to a situation where the character image data cannot be found; and

25 controlling the server so as to transmit, to the client computer, character image data that has been generated or character image data that has been found.

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